



LIPS THAT WERE SEALED

BY ALMA MARTIN ESTADBROOK
AUTHOR OF "MY COUSIN PATRICIA"

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—The story opens with a scene at a box party. Miss Henrietta Winstanley, sister of Bishop Winstanley, overheard Barker Ankyon propose to Barbara Hemingray, whose brother Dan was in his employ. Dan was one of the town's popular young men. Dan showed some nervousness when Attorney Tom Twining told him Barbara refused Ankyon.

Barbara was giving him excellent service for his money. Dan looked at me oddly. "You don't understand, Tom," he said. "It seems to me I understand perfectly, and I'd like to thank him for his impudence."

He laughed, but the troubled look came back quickly to his usually sunny face.

"Miss Winstanley says he proposed to her to-night," I said.

He looked positively ghastly at that.

"Oh, good Lord!" he cried. "I hoped she could save him off!"

"She didn't accept him."

"No, no—of course not. But I wish—"

"It seems to me," I cut in, "that you'd be glad to have it over. He was bound to offer himself sooner or later, and now that he's done it and she has refused him, you all understand each other, and he won't be forever underfoot, as he has been. It will be much less embarrassing all around."

He shook his head and, lighting a cigar, walked on moodily beside me.

"Ankyon is the devil," he said nervously. "You don't understand."

CHAPTER II.

The next day Ankyon sent for me. I am the legal adviser of the Central Savings Company.

He was looking particularly bellicose. It was at once evident to me that he had his foot on somebody's neck and meant to keep it there. I thought of what Miss Winstanley had said of self-made men in the first generation. Surely, I told myself, there were but few of them who were not belligerent.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" Ankyon declared.

I removed my gloves and found a comfortable chair. I was in no haste, as I am not greatly interested in the kettles of the acting president of the Central Savings Company, except as I am paid to become so, and Ankyon's mood and the recollection of his aggressiveness the night before made me a little more antagonistic, if possible, than usual.

"It's the last thing in the world anybody would have thought likely to happen," he said. "Upon my soul, I don't see why it's so hard for a man to keep himself square these days. He has been going it a bit strong, perhaps, but I'm fond of him, and I'm not naturally suspicious, and the thought that he might be tempted never occurred to me."

"Would you mind going at it other end round?" I suggested, for I hate to guess at things.

He flushed. He hates suggestions.

"If you want it flat, flat you'll get it," he said, coarsely. "Hemingray's been stealing from the company."

I smoothed my gloves.

"No," said I quietly. "oh, no; not Dan Hemingray."

Ankyon was purple in a minute.

"You're mighty sure of that, are you?" he sneered.

"I am," said I. "I know Dan Hemingray."

"You know Jim Austin, too, don't you?"

I winced inwardly. Austin is an expert accountant, inflexible, and an honest fellow besides.

"What of that?" I demanded.

"Well, he says Hemingray is a thief."

"I'm sorry he thinks so," I remarked.

"You don't? You won't?"

"No, of course I won't."

"You mean that Austin's wrong?"

"He may be. No man is infallible always."

"Jim Austin hasn't been found making any mistakes that I know of."

"What does he say about it?" I asked.

"That Hemingray has taken about three thousand, and that he has been taking it for more than six months. Of course I understand that under the circumstances—"

"Under no circumstances would I believe a thing like that until I had been proved to me."

"I won't take long to prove it. We'll call Austin."

"Wait. If you are convinced, you may convince me, if you can. I am not ready to talk with any one outside yet. Not even Austin."

He sneered openly. A sneer from a man like Ankyon is not a nice thing to stand. I beat my gloves against my leg. I wanted to throw them in his face. But it was not at just the stage in the proceedings when I could afford to, so I held down my chin.

He dragged a chair to the table, and followed. He flung open the books with an air of triumph that he had not the decency to conceal. I knew how he was smarting under Barbara's refusal.

For an hour we went over the accounts. Then we looked up and faced each other. Jim Austin had made no mistake.

"Social success is costly, you see," Ankyon commented. "A poor man can't afford to make himself quite so nice to the balt and the sick and the blind."

"Nor can a rich man afford to make himself so inebriated," said I. "You are talking of a friend of mine, remember?"

"A nice kind of a friend. I must say."

"An unfortunate one."

"I've no patience with that sort of thing, Twining," he declared, a little more conciliatingly.

"No, I don't expect you to have patience. Neither do I expect you to understand my temptation; I don't understand myself, for I wasn't born a rich man's son. I think God to have the silver spoon snatched suddenly out of my mouth and a rough power one pushed in its place! It's not a pleasant experience that, and if we haven't gone through it we don't know anything about it. It takes a strong man to meet that sort of thing and not be upset by it. Dan isn't strong, perhaps; he is only openhearted and big and generous and kind."

"And a thief," supplemented he.

"He was not an intentional one. He meant to put the money back, I am assured of that."

"Oh, they all expect to do that."

"I dare say," I replied unargumentatively.

"That's no excuse," he protested.

"I am not urging it as one."

"A man's a fool to take such chances."

"Discretion stands for morality with you, then?" I remarked.

"No such thing!" he cried. "There's no use in getting excited or sore about this thing, Twining."

I made a hasty calculation and offered him my proposition. It was refused to him before the end of six weeks all that Hemingray had taken with interest. Dan to be turned over to me, and nothing to be said of the affair to any one.

"I suppose you call that restitution?" he inquired.

"Something like it, yes."

"Well, I don't. We're tired of this thing of being robbed behind our backs by the men we trust. I didn't send for you to consider ways and means of getting the money back and letting Hemingray go set free. I sent for you as the company's attorney to proceed at once with the necessary steps leading to his arrest and incarceration."

"Ah," said I, "now we understand each other."

He nodded.

"I would hardly have expected this of you, Ankyon."

"Do you admit the theft, don't you?"

"Do you admit the motive that prompts you in the prosecution?"

"That's got nothing to do with it. But naturally—quite naturally, I'm sure—it is to our interest to stop this business and make an example of the thief. We've stood it too long already. This is the fifth time this has happened to the company in twice that many years. I tell you it won't do to let it go on."

I looked at him and smiled. It may not have been a very pleasant smile. I certainly didn't intend it to be, and he flushed beneath it.

"What do you mean?" he blustered.

"That what you are telling me is all nonsense," I retorted.

"Now that you've gone this far, perhaps you will go a little farther and make yourself plain," he cried angrily.

"Certainly. You were refused last night by Miss Hemingray."

"She told you that?"

"If you know her better you would not ask such a question. She told me nothing. You made your proposal so public that the refusal was bound to be more or less so, and you have yourself to thank for the fact that I, with others, know of it. Now, to make her suffer, you throw her brother into prison."

He got up hotly and took a step or two toward me.

"Be careful what you say. You know better than that."

"Your habit has not been to run down offenders," I remarked.

"We've had to let several of them go because of their relation to members of the company. But there must be a stop somewhere, and I am in earnest when I say that it must be here. I'm sorry for the boy and for his sister, though I don't expect you to believe it. But—"

"No, don't," said I.

I took up my hat.

"Wait! Where are you going?"

"Back to my office."

"What for?"

"Because our interview is at an end."

"It's only begun. We must talk of how we are to proceed."

I walked toward the door.

"Am I to understand you refuse to have anything to do with the prosecution?" he cried.

"You certainly are, Ankyon."

"I must remind you of your obligation to the company."

"There's an obligation before it," I said, my hand on the knob.

"That sounds very fine," he sneered.

"Naturally, I can understand that you wish the Hemingray name kept clean, since—"

"Don't go any further, if you please. I shall send in my resignation at once."

"Oh, better think twice of that, Mr. Twining."

I went out and shut the door. But half-way down the hall I turned deliberately, hesitated only a moment, and went back. What pride I had for myself and for Dan and Barbara was gone. Matters must be amicably adjusted if possible.

"Ankyon," I said, going in to him. "for God's sake think of Miss Hemingray. If you won't think of the boy, if she had accepted you last night, you would not have followed this course. You wouldn't have considered it. You would have been full of other plans this morning. Surely we can't hold women to blame for not caring for us when we ask them to be our wives. Love isn't to be compelled; you know that as well as I do. Think better of this 'won't you' you know what an honored place she has always been in the community. You know what luck they've had ever since their father's death. How they've not it. You have seen a great in their house, a friend of them both. You must have admired their courage, their smiles, and the incomparable way in which they've been able to make themselves to make things come right. The boy has been 'wealth'."

"He stole the money—" he broke in.

"Yes, I know he did. I'm not exonerating him; I'm not trying to. It was a crime, and I recognize it, of course, and your right to prosecute, if you are so determined. But put yourself in his place if you can. He is simply prodigal in his kindness. There are more people in town to-day who have been buoyed up and brightened by him than by any other man, old or young. Maybe he did take your money to help do it. But as much as he ever expected to do anything he expected to pay it all back. He staid himself; it was only with others he was generous. And then his sister—he wanted to make things easy for her if he could. He was ashamed to admit that he couldn't keep it up. Foolish? Of course it was foolish. But you admire him a little for trying to carry his end of the Hemingray string as I had always been kept up, don't you? You see what it has already cost him. Don't make it cost him everything he's got. Give him another chance. He'll redeem himself. You'll see. Try him."

"You ask too much."

"Too much! I only ask what you've done for fellows that were rascals and deep-dyed culprits. Surely you can give him the leniency you gave them. As for the bad influence, there won't be any, as you must admit, since no one knows of it, nor will know of it."

"I dare say," I replied unargumentatively.

"That's no excuse," he protested.

"I am not urging it as one."

"A man's a fool to take such chances."

"Discretion stands for morality with you, then?" I remarked.

"No such thing!" he cried. "There's no use in getting excited or sore about this thing, Twining."

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"I suppose you call that restitution?" he inquired.

"Something like it, yes."

"Well, I don't. We're tired of this thing of being robbed behind our backs by the men we trust. I didn't send for you to consider ways and means of getting the money back and letting Hemingray go set free. I sent for you as the company's attorney to proceed at once with the necessary steps leading to his arrest and incarceration."

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TO CONSUMPTIVES.

Edward A. Wilson's Preparation of Hypophosphites and Blodgett from the original formula is the Sovereign Remedy for Consumption, Asthma, Catarrh, La Grippe, Coughs, Colds, and all Throat and Lung Maladies.

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60 Ann Street, New York City, N. Y.

015754

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Santa Fe, N. M., Aug. 9, 1909. Notice is hereby given that Walter C. Williams, of Bernalillo, N. M., who on April 21st, 1908, made Homestead Entry No. 1027, Serial No. 01474, for 160 acres, Section 2, Township 1 N., Range 2 E., N. M., has filed notice of intention to make Final Commutation Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before W. M. Weddington, U. S. Comm., at Bernalillo, N. M., on the 9th day of September, 1909. Claimant names as witnesses: D. H. Williams, George C. Taylor, William Fiedler, John Powell, All of Bernalillo, N. M.

First Aug 14—last Sep 4

014204

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Roswell, N. M., July 2, 1909. Notice is hereby given that Andrew C. Roberts, of Schroeder, N. Mex., who on March 2nd, 1909, made Homestead Entry No. 1422, Serial No. 01294, for 160 acres, Section 1, Township 1 S., Range 2 E., N. M., has filed notice of intention to make Final Commutation Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before Frank N. Page, U. S. Comm., at Schroeder, N. M., on the 9th day of September, 1909. Claimant names as witnesses: Wesley Howard, Nelson T. Crawford, James L. Navarre, James W. Grizzle, All of Schroeder, N. M.

First Aug 14—last Sep 4

012654

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Roswell, N. M., July 2, 1909. Notice is hereby given that Frank B. Smith, of Buchanan, N. M., who on July 18, 1907, made Homestead Entry No. 1214, Serial No. 01251, for 160 acres, Section 1, Township 1 S., Range 2 E., N. M., has filed notice of intention to make Final Commutation Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before Frank N. Page, U. S. Comm., at Schroeder, N. M., on the 9th day of September, 1909. Claimant names as witnesses: Thomas Chavez, Thomas E. Conner, Postmaster at Buchanan, N. M., William E. Baker, All of Buchanan, N. M.

First Aug 14—last Sep 4

013566

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Roswell, N. M., July 2, 1909. Notice is hereby given that Melvin T. Crawford, of Schroeder, N. M., who, July 2nd, 1908, made Homestead Entry No. 1422, Serial No. 01294, for 160 acres, Section 1, Township 1 S., Range 2 E., N. M., has filed notice of intention to make Final Commutation Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before Frank N. Page, U. S. Comm., at Schroeder, N. M., on the 9th day of September, 1909. Claimant names as witnesses: Andrew C. Roberts, George A. Kelly, Wesley Howard, James W. Grizzle, All of Schroeder, N. M.

First Aug 14—last Sep 4

0131

CONTEST NOTICE.

Department of the Interior, United States Land Office, Roswell, New Mexico, July 2, 1909. A notice of contest against having been filed in his office by Arnette E. Anderson, contestant, against Homestead Entry No. 1422, made December 4, 1907, for 160 acres, Section 1, Township 1 S., Range 2 E., N. M., by Paul N. Brown, Contestee, in which it is alleged that said entryman has wrongfully obtained land for more than six months last past, said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond and file the evidence touching said subject, on or before the 15th day of September, 1909, before the U. S. Commissioner at the United States Land Office at Roswell, New Mexico.

The said contestant having, in a proper affidavit filed, set forth facts which show that after due diligence personal service of this notice has not been made, it is hereby ordered and directed that such notice be given by due and proper publication.

T. C. TILLOTSON, Register.
HAROLD HURD, Receiver.

Aug 7—Sep 11

Serial No. 05761

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Not coal land.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Santa Fe, N. M., August 11, 1909.

Notice is hereby given that Thomas T. Jones, of Bernalillo, N. M., who, on Feb. 25, 1908, made Homestead Entry No. 1228, for 160 acres, Section 1, Township 1 S., Range 2 E., N. M., has filed notice of intention to make Final Commutation Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before W. M. Weddington, U. S. Comm., at Bernalillo, N. M., on the 9th day of September, 1909. Claimant names